# GENERAL

# ADMINISTRATION REPORT

OF THE

# GARO HILLS DISTRICT

FOR THE

## Year 1875-76.

SIMLA:

GOVERNMENT CENTRAL BRANCH PRESS.

1876.

Tour.

During the months of April, May and June, the Deputy Commissioner was generally at head-quarters; but he made frequent visits to examine the roads to Daloo and Roomari. In July he proceeded to Dhubri to inspect the postal line between that place and Tura. The country was much inundated, the line being intersected with streams, which are not properly bridged. Communications are not unfrequently interrupted. Propositions regarding the adoption of a new line for the conveyance of mails for the Garo Hills will be found under the head of "Post Office."

Detachment ordered to Naga Hills.

Visit to Ringigiri.

In October, orders were received to despatch a detachment of 50 police for service in the Naga Hills under the Political Agent of that part of the country. It became therefore necessary to withdraw the police out-post from Ringigiri, and the Deputy Commissioner proceeded to that village to ascertain if this could be done without ill consequences arising. This out-post was placed at Ringigiri as a punishment to the people of Ringigiri, who in February 1875 had been implicated in the murder of a Bengali traveller, under circumstances which have already been fully detailed in last year's report. The out-post had been kept up for nine months with very good effect on all villages in the neighbourhood; the immediate necessity for its maintenance had passed away, and as a good path has been opened between Tura and Nibari, between which places communications were well established, the police were withdrawn and part of the guard was sent on service in the Naga Hills.

Out-post withdrawn.

In the latter part of October and early part of November, owing partly to Mr. Cawley's absence on privilege leave, the Deputy Commissioner was at head-quarters. Towards the latter end of November, the Deputy Commissioner proceeded *viâ* Rungkugiri to Danagiri under the foot of the Tura mountains, he remained encamped a few days at Danagiri and was engaged in disposing of several Garo cases, &c.; while at this village he took the opportunity of exploring the bed of the Bogai river near Darengsagiri which had not hitherto been visited. He found limestone of good quality in abundance; this stone might be conveyed in boats down the Bogai to Mymensing, but there is no chance for many years, if ever, of its competing successfully with the supplies derived from the Khasi Hills. This part of the district has not been visited since July 1872, at the time the Garos were in a very disturbed state. The villagers of Danagiri were very pleased indeed to see the Deputy Commissioner and did all in their power to assist him.

Proceeds to Danagiri.

Good limestone in the Bogai.

Danagiri is situated close to the Tura range and very near the Virgin Forest which clothes these hills; this forest being far removed from water carriage the timber cannot be made use of, but its local value was explained to the Garos, and they were told that if they cleared the "Boldám," as they call the Virgin Forest, and denuded the range of trees, then the rainfall would decrease and drought become of common occurrence; although they could not perhaps thoroughly grasp this idea, they felt no doubt the forest demon might be enraged with them and cut off the

Virgin Forest.

Jhooms confined to old clearances.

rain supply; they promised to limit their future operations to the land which has already been jhooming.

Route across the Tura range.

From Danagiri the Deputy Commissioner crossed the Tura range by the Raja Rama to the village of Mandalgiri, which in 1869 had under its Luskur Thoja shortly opposed our advance. Times have changed since then, and Thoja is now one of the best and most reliable of the Luskurs. The object that was held in view in taking this route was that an opportunity of a visit to the Tura lakes might be obtained. Reports of the existence of a large lake on the summit of the range had often been made, though no reliance had been placed on them. The lake or the "diggi," as the Garos call it, was found to be a small piece of marshy ground, situated on a hill near the summit of the Nokreh mountain; it was nearly dry at this season and was covered with a sedgy grass; in the rains it might hold three feet of water. There were numerous marks of wild cattle about, but none were seen; the so-called lake or diggi was situated in thick forest, at an elevation of over 4,000, at Mondolgiri.

Land disputes.

The Deputy Commissioner was engaged in disposing of a land dispute case between the villagers of Mondolgiri and Chandigiri; a local enquiry was made and the disputed boundaries carefully examined. From Mondolgiri the Deputy Commissioner marched *viâ* Bandigiri, Ringigiri, Chawalgiri, Dinamangiri, Saramphang to Rongrengiri. This part of the country had not been visited since 1871, and Captain Williamson had never been along this route before. Everywhere the Garos were glad to see him, cleared the paths, built huts, and in short gave all the assistance that was required or expected from them.

Route to Rongrengiri.

Two or three days were spent at Rongrengiri in meeting the Luskurs and Luckmas of the neighbourhood, and in disposing of a number of land disputes and blood feuds, &c. On the 30th of November the Deputy Commissioner had to proceed to Tura in order to make over the treasury to Mr. Cawley on his return from leave. After having disposed of this and other pending business at Tura, the Deputy Commissioner returned to Rongrengiri. A large number of the Luskurs and Luckmas had collected to meet him there.

The opportunity was taken to impress on the Luskurs and Luckmas the importance of keeping the paths from village to village along the main routes across the hill open; they promised to keep the lines clear and to make rough bridges on the simple principle which was practically explained to them. They have since cleared the roads as they were directed to do.

Village post.

The difficulties in maintaining communication with the more remote villages were commented on in last year's report. This year a plan was discussed with the Luckmas which will obviate many of the inconveniences that were then noticed. It was proposed that a Luskur, say living at Damra Duar, wishing to communicate with the Deputy Commissioner, should get a letter written in Bengali which he would have no difficulty in effecting; this letter will be enclosed in a large red envelope, of which a supply of five or six will be granted to the persons likely to require them. On the appearance of a red letter in any village, it will be the duty of the headman to at once send it on to Tura. The Luckmas promised to forward these covers

Red envelope.

without delay, and if any village is found to have caused any delay, a fine will be inflicted. This plan when put into operation will tend to facilitate communication with the outlying parts of the district, particularly in the Damra Duar, and will besides be a good training in discipline for all the villages *en route* between Tura and that quarter.

Hâts at Saramphang and Rongrengiri.

The advantages that will accrue from a further development of the hât at Saramphang were explained to the Garos, and they are anxious that it should be encouraged; it will perhaps be desirable that the site of the market should be moved in time from Saramphang to Rongrengiri, especially if it grows to any size; at present the market is held only in the rains when the Garos of the inner hills cannot conveniently spare the time to get away to the markets in the plains. The traders who supply the articles in demand at Saramphang are the Garos of the villages of Rynch, Seejoo and other villages near the Summessuri, who do a good business in dried fish, cattle, and in the cold weather buy up a considerable amount of cotton.

Blood feuds and surrender of skulls.

The Deputy Commissioner was able while in camp at Rongrengiri to settle a number of old blood feuds and no less than 200 skulls, the remains of victims killed in former raids or murdered in various ways, were surrendered and publicly burnt. It is very gratifying to find the Garos of the inner hills giving up their trophies upon which they set great value. It must not be thought however they have surrendered them all or that they have totally abandoned the customs that tends to make a skull valuable; but as they get better accustomed to us and the country is opened out, these customs will die a natural death. From Rongrengiri the Deputy Commissioner marched *viâ* Runhakgiri, Rungribugri to Mondalangiri where a camp had been prepared for him on the bank of the Damreng river. From Mondalangiri he marched *viâ* Watrigiri, Bonigiri to Ringigiri and from that village into Tura.

The route from Rongrengiri to Ringigiri lay through villages that submitted in 1873 and have not been visited since that date by European officers. The Garos here as elsewhere were very glad to see the Deputy Commissioner and assisted willingly in clearing the paths and in furnishing coolies and in building the necessary encampment. The Deputy Commissioner was enabled in this trip to travel with a facility he has not hitherto enjoyed. News was sent ahead to villages *en route* and coolies were waiting at each stage to carry on the baggage to the next village; in this way rapid progress was made; the rate of pay given varied from one to three annas according to the distance travelled,—an ample wage, when the light assessment the Garos pay and the infrequency of demands made on them for labour are taken into consideration.

Health of the people.

The health of the people has been good during the past year in this part of the country, and the outturn of the crops fairly abundant. The inhabitants of the villages through which the Deputy Commissioner passed in this part of the tour seemed to be very well-to-do.

On the 15th December the Deputy Commissioner left Tura for Calcutta on the leave which had been granted him. He returned to head-quarters on the 12th January, and after a few days' stay at Tura

he proceeded to Mohendragunge to join Captain Badgley in order to undertake the demarcation of the boundary between the Garo Hills and Mymensing. This work which was thoroughly carried out was not completed until the 8th February.

On the 15th February the Deputy Commissioner again left Tura for the Khasi Hills boundary, the Chief Commissioner having ordered that this boundary must also be taken up this season. The work was commenced at the Moheshkali, and the line was laid down as far as the junction of the Rungkai ahd Semsang rivers. The Deputy Commissioner was employed on boundary business from the 20th January to 11th March. After this he visited the villages of Seejoo and Rynch where he had some land dispute cases, &c., to settle, which occupied him until the 19th March, after which he marched into Tura *viâ* Daloo where he arrived on the 23rd March.

A map* shewing the tours made by the Deputy Commissioner is appended. So much time was occupied in the boundaries between the Khasi and Garo Hills and Mymensing that the Deputy Commissioner was compelled, as he had much work at head-quarters, to abandon the idea he had conceived of making a long tour through the Damra Duar. It is an important matter to have the boundaries all round this district clearly defined. When this work is completed, which it should be next cold weather, he will have leisure to take up many matters that require attention inside the district.

Mission schools.

He was unable to visit the Mission schools or to arrange about the establishment of an outpost in the Damra Duar which was one of the reforms alluded to in last year's Administration Report. There being only two European officers in the district, one of them, Mr. Cawley, is always required at head-quarters, and the Deputy Commissioner cannot get over more than a certain amount of ground and through a certain amount of work; the country is so difficult, and the distances to be travelled so great, that much of the district cannot be visited in the year.

Crime.

There has been a falling off in the total number of cases of all kinds disposed of during the year under report. The return shows that only 43 cases of all kinds were disposed of against 65 in 1874-75, 46 in 1873-74, and 30 in 1872-73.

Cases in Mymensing District.

In 1874-75 a number of cases which occurred in Mymensing District close to the Garo Hills frontier were disposed of by the Deputy Commissioner of the Garo Hills. These cases caused a considerable increase in the criminal returns for that year. During the year under review there have been no such cases except one case of theft, the parties concerned in which were transferred to the Magistrate of Mymensing for disposal. The arrest of the criminals concerned in the dacoities near Kangsha in July 1874, and their subsequent trial and conviction, had no doubt had a most salutary effect in checking crime in that locality.

Total absence of cases of frontier raids.

The past year has been marked by an entire absence of all cases of frontier raids and dacoities, and the border population have been enabled to pursue their avocations undisturbed in any way by the

* Not sent to Foreign Office.

Garos,—a very marked change to the state of affairs that prevailed in this part of the country ten years ago when the direct administration of these hills was first undertaken.

Cases of murder.

There were only two cases of murder during the year 1875; the first has already been commented on in last year's Administration Report.

Ringigiri case.

Two Bengali travellers were attacked by two Garos of Ringigiri, and one was murdered and his head taken. This occurred in the inner Garo Hills. These Bengalis had neglected ordinary precaution in going unarmed along a road they were ignorant of, through villages that had hardly settled down. The criminals were promptly arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The proceedings in this case were favorably noticed by the Chief Commissioner.

Thoding's case.

The second case was a particularly shocking one, and exhibits a peculiar custom of the Garos. A man named Thoding, Garo of the village of Rakmanpara, was insulted, or supposed himself to have been insulted by a fellow-villager named Kengkul. Instead of revenging himself by an attack on Kengkul, which might have been considered natural under the circumstances according to European notions, the murderer adopted an entirely different course. He burnt down the two hamlets of Rakmanpara. When the first hamlet was fired, the inhabitants attributed the conflagration to some accidental cause, but when the second hamlet appeared in flames, they were afraid the work was that of an incendiary. They were not left long in suspense, for some of the victims of Thoding's brutality soon appeared on the scene to acquaint them of the real facts. Thoding having fired the first village made his way to the second hamlet, where it so happened only women and children were present; he deliberately set this hamlet on fire, and as the affrighted women ran out of their houses, he cut them down. He thus killed six women and children and wounded six others, women and children, one of whom subsequently died. He also wounded one man. All would probably have died had it not been for the great exertions of the Civil Surgeon who spared no time and trouble in attending to the wounded. Thoding committed these crimes solely with a view of bringing ruin on his enemy Kengkul, for the latter according to the Garo custom having provoked Thoding was in a measure liable to his acts; and had the custom in this instance been allowed to prevail, Kengkul would no doubt have been ruined by the demands made on his means. The moment the news of the crime reached the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Cawley and Dr. Ferris were deputed to the spot,—the former to endeavour to effect the arrest of the criminal, the latter to attend the wounded. The diabolical conduct of the murderer had quite appalled and paralysed the people of Rakmanpara, and they were incapable of rendering any assistance in effecting his capture. But the inhabitants of neighbouring villages, some of whose connections had fallen victims to his ferocity, were not so much cowed, and, stimulated as they were by a reward for his arrest, succeeded in capturing him, though not before he had remained at large more than three weeks. He was tried at Tura in May and was sentenced to death, which was approved by the Chief Commissioner, and he was executed at

Tura on the 5th June 1875. He was the first person who was executed since the Garo Hills were made a separate district in 1866. The minds of the people at Tura were set at rest by his death. The inhabitants dreaded his escape, for he had openly declared that should he enjoy the opportunity he would add many more persons to his already heavy list of victims.

Culpable homicide.

There was only one case under this head in which a Garo of the village of Damgiri was charged with stabbing another Garo of the same village. The parties had been drinking together when the accused in a sudden fit of passion inflicted the wound which caused death. From the evidence it appeared that there was no ill-feeling or premeditation, and the prisoner, when he came to his senses, was so overcome with what he had done that he nearly committed suicide. He was committed and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for a term of three years.

Theft.

There is a diminution under the cases of theft. There were 15 cases in which 21 persons were concerned, against 27 cases and 54 persons in 1874. Of these 21 persons, 16 were convicted, 3 acquitted, and one case in which 2 persons were concerned, who had not been arrested, remained pending at the end of the year.

Lock-up.

During the year the Chief Commissioner sanctioned a lock-up and the retention of not more than 25 short-term prisoners at Tura who were to be employed in clearing away the jungle round the station. The prisoners were used on this work with very good effect in the rains, and a considerable amount of the low scrub has been swept away to the great advantage of the residents. Much yet remains to be done in the way of jungle clearing, but in the course of five or six months, if the numbers of the prisoners are maintained near their sanctioned strength, it is hoped a large space will be opened out around the station which will help to keep away the wild beasts, and in time when the dupa grass has had time to grow will afford good grazing ground for the cattle, which is a want much felt at Tura.

Grazing ground.

The hut which formerly did duty for a jail was neither commodious nor secure, and it was only in March last that the new lock-up which had been sanctioned was commenced. It is since finished. Two prisoners contrived to effect their escape from the old building last year. They slipped by the sentries when the prisoners were being counted in the early morning preparatory to proceeding to cook their morning meal. They got behind the building and slipped down into the jungle before they were missed, which was not long. Search was made immediately, but the abundant jungle afforded them close cover, and they continued to elude their pursuers and have not since been captured.

Civil cases.

There were not many regular civil cases instituted during the year and there were none of any importance; 22 cases were brought against certain defaulting duffadars of coolies by one Hira Sing, the agent of Bolanath Chakladar. These duffadars had engaged to bring a certain number of coolies from Sylhet to work the kheddahs in the Garo Hills, and large advances were

made them. They never produced the full number of coolies, and those that did arrive on the scene absconded without doing any work. Besides these civil cases, a considerable number of Garo cases, blood feuds, references from punchayuts, &c., were disposed of during the year.

Ferries.

The only ferries in the district are those on the Roomari road. There are three ferries on this road between Tura and Mankarchur, and one between Mankarchur and Roomari over the Jingiram river. This latter ferry is in the Rungpore District. Prior to 1875-76 these ferries had been an annual charge to the State; they were leased this year "revenue-free" to one Dino Pal, and he maintained them in fair order during the rainy season, the only time they are required. No accidents whatever occurred at these ferries. The receipts are so small owing to the small amount of traffic that the lessee could not have afforded to have paid any revenue.

Weather and crops.

On the whole the weather during the year 1875 was favorable to the health of the people and the growth of the crops on which they depend for subsistence. The district was visited by no bad storms, disastrous floods or long periods of drought. The rains of February and March somewhat checked the burning of the jhooms, but otherwise they were beneficial by supplying abundant moisture to the clearances of the previous year which are always sown before the new jhooms.

Garo system of agriculture.

The Garo agricultural operations are as follows:—

The ground is selected in December or January, and the jungle is cut down and allowed to lie on the ground drying until the middle or end of March when it is burnt. A jhoom is cultivated for two years running, in the first year everything is sown in the new clearance, in the second only dhan or kaor. The seeds are put down in the month of April generally; shortly after the jhoom is burnt and cleared of the fallen or unburnt rubbish, the seeds in the last year or old jhooms are put in a fortnight or more earlier. The rice and kaor crops are an early one usually, and is reaped in July and August: the second principal crop,—the cotton,—is gathered in October, November and December. Vegetables are gathered during the rains from June to September and October. Rice crops are later on the central hills near and on the Tura range. The Garo therefore requires a moderate amount of rain in February and March, a good deal in April and May, and up till the time the crop is nearly fit for reaping when fine weather is wanted. In September and October a moderate rainfall is needed to develope the cotton which, however, a too heavy down-pour would materially injure.

The rainfall of 1875 was slightly in excess in the earlier months of the year and also too abundant in the months of June, July and August, while it was too scanty in the months of September and October.

Rice crop.

The rice crop was generally a good one except in some of the border villages near Mohendragunge and the eastern part of the district where the soil is very barren.

Cotton crop.

Some complaints were made about the want of rain for the cotton crops, and in some cultivations visited by the Deputy Commissioner, it seemed very poor, but the returns received from the frontier out-posts in the Goalpara District show an increase in the amount exported this year over the year 1874-75. The people may be considered to have for the most part enjoyed fair crops during 1875. The few months of January, February, March 1876 have been characterized by a total absence of rain, and the consequence has been that the dried and parched up country has yielded to devastating jungle fires which have generally had their origin in some Garo jhooms from which the fire fanned by the wind has passed beyond the control of the agriculturist. The jungle fires will materially injure the prospects of the crops in 1877, for the ground having been so lately burnt, and all the undergrowth swept off, it has lost much of its power of reproduction, and will not in the one year that intervenes between this time and next season have time to recover itself. The Garos, with a keen instinct to their own interests carefully guard against the spread of fires from the jhooms, and do all in their power to check jungle fires of all kinds. The damage done by Bengalis and Hajongs firing the grass savannahs in the plains near the Moheshkali river was a source of much complaint this last cold weather, and the Deputy Commissioner has drawn the attention of the Magistrate of Mymensing to the matter, and he is in hopes that the practice may be checked.

Jungle fires.

Rainfall.

The total rainfall as registered at Tura during the calendar year 1875 was 119·70 inches as compared with 134·23 inches in 1874 and 85·70 in 1873. The gauge has been regularly kept at Tura for the years 1871-72-73-74 and 1875; the average of the past five years is 111·79 inches. The smallest fall, 85·70, was in 1873, the famine year in Bengal; the heaviest fall in 1874 when it amounted to 134·23 inches.

A register was kept up at Rongrengiri, the police out-post in the centre of the Hills, during the year 1875; the amount of rain is given as 100·34 inches, but the figures are not entirely reliable. The heaviest fall of rain was on July 10th when 10½ inches fell. Heavy rain fell in the early part of the month of August, and communications were cut off from the plains owing to the floods.

Temperature.

A register of the maximum and minimum range of the thermometer was kept during the year—the lowest point to which the mercury fell was 51°, and this was reached on the 6th and 28th January; 90° was the highest temperature recorded, which was experienced on the 19th April; the next highest point 89° was registered on the 30th March and 3rd June.

The highest average diurnal temperature was registered in April being 85° 46', the lowest in January 54° 64'.

Model Farms.

There are none in this district.

Lac.

The Deputy Commissioner cultivated some lac, and distributed a good deal of it among the Garos for propagation. At first the people had a great objection

to it, as they declared cotton and lac could not thrive together, that lac would oust the cotton. Their prejudices appear to have been conquered, for they came freely this year and demanded the spare lac, and all that was available was issued to them. The result of the experiment will not be known till next cold season.

Spanish chestnut.
Coffee.

Some Spanish chestnut seeds were planted but none germinated. The coffee plants did not prove a success, but there are now very few of them left.

Mahogany trees.

The Mahogany trees which were planted in 1873-74 are thriving well, and have been carefully looked after.

Doop grass.

Doop grass was planted over a great part of the station and has been moderately successful, but the place still looks very bare. A number of fruit-trees were planted out during the year, and those planted in previous years are for the most part thriving well, and in a few years more will, unless destroyed by a cyclone, be a great ornament. Jack-trees, which grow very rapidly and have dark olive colored ever-green foliage, have been made most use of. There are some well-grown clumps of these trees which were planted in 1869-70; they already yield a good supply of fruit.

Jack trees.

Guinea grass.

An attempt was made to grow some guinea grass, but it proved a failure.

Mangoes.

The mangoe and liche trees which the Deputy Commissioner imported from the Agricultural and Horticultural Society on his own account and distributed to the residents in 1874 have not thrived, and it is feared none of them will come to much.

Orange and lime.

Some orange and lime trees of good varieties are doing well and will, it is hoped, prove a success.

Eucalyptus globulus.

Some *Eucalyptus globulus* trees were planted some 15 months ago, are now trees 15 and 16 feet high, and several young pines of Khasi Hills variety are thriving well.

Peach trees.

Peach trees thrive excellently and fruit abundantly.

Trade and commerce.

Returns of the outturn of cotton and lac were received from 8 of the principal marts situated in the Goalpara District. No returns were received from the markets in the zilla of Mymensing. The returns show that 48,224 maunds of uncleaned cotton were disposed of at these hâts, of which 6,612 maunds were retained for local consumption, and 41,612 were exported to the Lower Provinces of Bengal. Besides the above amount of uncleaned cotton, 736 maunds 2 seers of cleaned cotton were disposed of at the markets and 1,325 maunds 15 seers of this article was despatched to Bengal. Last year the returns received from these very markets

put down the outturn of cotton at 24,000 maunds, in the year 1873-74 the yield was shewn as 14,000 maunds; these figures are not accurate and much reliance cannot be placed on them. The latest figures seem however to be the most correct. In last year's annual report the Deputy Commissioner calculated that the annual outturn of cotton was at least 50,000 to 60,000 maunds, and the returns now submitted tend to support this view: 24,000 maunds is an absurdly low estimate as was shewn from the observations made by the Deputy Commissioner personally at the Putimari market in 1875, where above 9,600 were probably disposed of.

Lac.

From the returns it appears that 4,092 maunds of lac were disposed of at the Nilbari and Damra markets. Out of this Damra supplied 3,855 maunds and Jirah 236 only. This lac was all exported.

The figures of 1874-75 put down the outturn at 2,000 maunds only; all of it was brought down by native traders and was exported to Bengal.

Charkas.

The Chief Commissioner sanctioned a small sum in July 1874 for the purchase of some good charkas and directed the Deputy Commissioner to endeavour to increase the outturn of cleaned cotton of which a very small amount is brought to the market; 20 charkas were imported from the Central Provinces at a cost of Rs. 77 and some of them were distributed among the Garos, but they were two-handed machines and they crushed the seeds a great deal and were not approved by the people to whom they were issued, who preferred the common Bengali charka which is procurable at all the hâts at a cost of 3 or 4 annas. These small charkas are worked with one hand and are the simplest possible machine, and they do not break the seed, but the amount of cleaned cotton they are capable of turning out in a day is very small. However if every house had 3 or 4 and the children were taught to use them, there would soon be a very perceptible increase in the outturn of túla or cleaned cotton. The Deputy Commissioner will not lose sight of this matter, and he hopes in time to induce the people to send a great deal more cleaned cotton to the markets than they at present do.

Price of food and labour.

The price of rice and other food staples continues much the same as last year; there is a slight fall in the price of rice,—16 seers for the rupee are now sold against 15 and 14 at the corresponding time last year.

The harvest in the plains near Daloo, from whence the supplies of grain for the Tura market are drawn, was good and abundant. When the cart road between Tura and Daloo is opened, a further fall in the above prices may be expected.

Grain, though slightly cheaper than last year, is still very dear. Salt continues at the same figure. The cost of labour is much the same as last year; coolies earning at Rs. 0-4-3 per diem or Rs. 8 per mensem.

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|---|---|---|---|
| Carpenters at | Rs. | 16 to 20 | per mensem. |
| Masons at | „ | 28 | „ |
| Syces at | „ | 8 to 9 | „ |
| Domestic servants at | „ | 8 to 25 | „ |

Bazar at Tura.

The bazar at Tura has gradually increased in size, until it now numbers about 35 shops which produce an annual rental of Rs. 630. This bazar is now capable of supplying the wants of the station. There are 3 rows of shops running parallel to each other and situated at a convenient distance from the police lines and the rest of the station. The principal trader is the agent of Raj Mejraj Bahadur of Moorsheedabad. He deals in grain wholesale, cloths, pots and pans, &c.

There are several traders from Dacca, Goalpara, Mankarchur and other places. These persons occupy the better class of shops. The remainder of the shop-keepers are Nepalese. They drive a good trade in rice, dried fish, poultry, pigs, &c., which they purchase in the plains near Daloo at cheap rates and sell at a considerable profit at Tura. Rice is to be had in the plains near Daloo at 30 seers per rupee, and it here sells at 15 and 16 seers.

A pony can make 5 trips to Daloo and back in the month and can bring up 10 maunds of rice of which about 4 maunds would be profit—4 maunds at Rs. 2-8= Rs. 10,—the risk from loss of cattle by death, tigers, the wear and tear and labour being calculated, a fair margin of profit is left to the trader. The Nepalese like the life, and the rice trade through the greater part of the year is entirely in their hands.

Garos using bazar.

The Garos are beginning to avail themselves of the Tura bazar, and a fair number of them may often be seen driving bargains with the shop-keepers. The market has not yet become a depôt for cotton which still continues to find its way to Putimari and the other markets in the plains.

Police, 1875.

A few changes were made in the distribution of Force during the year, but the total strength remained the same as in 1874. The three permanently established outposts of Rongrengiri, Damalgiri, and Daloo were kept up throughout the year. The number of officers and men employed at these guards is 1 sub-inspector, 4 head constables and 49 constables. In addition to the above, four outposts were held by the police during several months. Selbalgiri guard, which was posted in March 1874 in consequence of a hât having been opened there, was withdrawn at the end of April 1875 as the establishment of the hât proved unsuccessful. The remainder of the guard at Porakhasua near the Mymensing boundary, posted there during July 1874 in consequence of several dacoities having been committed by Garos in the adjacent villages, was withdrawn in February 1875, no further dacoities having occurred up to that time. But during that month an attack was made on two Bengali travellers, one of whom was killed and the other severely wounded by two villagers of Ringigri. This necessitated the establishment of a guard at that village. As the villagers gave no further trouble, this guard was withdrawn in October, when orders were received to furnish a detachment for duty with Naga Hills Expedition. A detachment of the following strength was sent on service to the Naga Hills: 1 inspector, 1 sub-inspector, 3 head constables and 45 constables. On the 24th of November, 1 inspector,

1 head constable and 23 constables returned to Tura, their services not being wanted. The remainder of the detachment was detained at Sibsagar where they are still serving. The detachment retained at Sibsagar for the Naga Hills Expedition consists of 1 sub-inspector, 2 head constables and 22 constables.

The force has been maintained in fair efficiency during the year, but owing to the Garos being in a perfectly peaceful state there was no opportunity given them of displaying their qualities for service. The detachment for the Naga Hills was composed of volunteers, and the difficulty was not to get men to go, but to select the best men from the excess of numbers who were all anxious to have a chance of service. This alacrity was creditable to the men and satisfactory to their officers.

Escort duties, more particularly during the cold season, occupy a great number of men, as officers on tour in the interior of the district require a certain number of men with them. All perwanahs and processes are conveyed by the police, and as a rule 10 to 15 men are constantly away from head-quarters on this duty.

The conduct of the superior officers, *i. e.*, inspectors and sub-inspectors, has been uniformly good. As a rule the duties on which both officers and men are employed give them few opportunities of distinguishing themselves.

Amongst the head constables and constables there have been fewer cases of gambling, drunkenness and creating disturbances in the lines. Perhaps the entertaining of only six Nepalese as recruits may have had the effect of reducing the number of cases of gambling and creating disturbances, for this class is above all others addicted to the vice of gambling. The rules regarding strangers entering the police lines, by which "passes" are invariably required, have had a beneficial effect in maintaining order and discipline. There are no cases of misconduct calling for any special remark. The total number of men wearing stripes at the beginning of the year was as follows, *viz.* :—

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| With | 3 | stripes | 12 | men. |
| „ | 2 | „ | 4 | „ |
| „ | 1 | stripe | 1 | man. |
| | | Total | 17 | men. |

During the year 20 stripes were awarded to 16 men and two stripes reduced,—one on account of a man discharged, the other as a punishment, leaving at the end of the year

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| With | 3 | stripes | 13 | men. |
| „ | 2 | „ | 5 | „ |
| „ | 1 | stripe | 14 | „ |
| | | Total | 32 | „ |

Two stripes were given as an exceptional case to one man (who already wore one stripe) as he had specially exerted himself in arresting three out of four Nepalese deserters with the assistance of two other men, who were also rewarded with promotion. The enlistments during the year amount to 34 men. No recruiting party

was sent to Darjeeling. The Deputy Commissioner was desirous to enlist more Garos so as to bring the number of this race of men up to the strength proposed by the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The Garos, however, do not take service readily, and only 16 men were recruited: nearly all of them came from villages near the foot of the hills at Damra. Many Jharuahs and Meches now in the force know Garo well. They are therefore quite as useful as Garos for the purpose of conveying orders and collecting information. The Goalpara District has furnished the largest number of recruits, *viz.*, 24 men, while only one, two, or three men have come from each of the Districts of Julpigoree, Mymensing, Bhagalpur, Purneah, Arrah, and 6 men from Nepal. Out of these men, 32 are totally illiterate, 11 are Hindus, the remainder, *viz.*, 23, are Garos, Rabhas, Kacharies:

Average height 5 feet 3 inches.
„ age 23 years.

The class of recruits obtained from the Darjeeling district is not generally very good. The men are not of the good castes of Nepalese: the better type of this race seeks employment in the military service. The Nepalese, however, are nearly always plucky, and do not fear the Garos or other hill men at all. They do not stand this climate as well as might have been expected.

Now that the new boundary line of this district includes along the foot of the hills several villages occupied by plains men, it will be necessary to enlist a few intelligent constables with qualifications which will admit of their being employed on civil duties and in making local enquiries. The class of men hitherto enlisted are not at all suited for this work. There are extremely few in the whole force who can write an intelligent report. There has been less difficulty this year in teaching the men such drill as they are required to know, and a decided improvement has taken place in the efficiency of the staff of instructors told off for that purpose. The instructors, no less so than the sub-inspectors, are still backward in the matter of musketry instruction, and it seems to be a matter of considerable difficulty to ensure that amount of care to the details of the preliminary drills on which the satisfactory result of target practice so much depends.

In September 1 head constable and 10 men were sent to Gauhati for musketry instruction with the men of the 42nd Native Infantry Regiment, Colonel Sherriff having permitted them to do so at the request of the Deputy Commissioner. Rupees 37 per month were sanctioned by the Chief Commissioner as remuneration to the instructor of the regiment for the extra work he was called on to perform.

But after remaining there a month it was necessary to send these men to join the detachment for the Naga Hills.

The withdrawal of 50 men with officers for Naga Hills, and several men and a sub-inspector having been engaged with the Deputy Commissioner and Captain Badgley in demarcating the new boundary, materially interfered with the completion of the annual course of musketry instruction and target practice, so that a redistribution of marksman's badges will not be carried out this season. Inspector Jatadhari Dobey was also sent off with the Naga Hills detachment, and only

returned at the end of November with 24 men, and unfortunately Ram Charan, Inspector, after repeated attacks of fever, died in November. A good deal of extra duty therefore devolved on the few remaining officers at head-quarters. It will be a difficult matter to find another officer equally good, efficient, and as trustworthy as Ram Charan, Inspector, always proved himself to be: his death is a great loss to the force.

At the beginning of the year there were 32 recruits; 34 men were enlisted during the 12 months. Out of the above, 46 were brought on to the effective strength of the force by the end of the year.

The number of native officers and men who can read and write is very small: only 48 of them write and read Bengali, and out of these very few have acquired much proficiency, while the remainder only know a little Nagri, which is of no practical use in this district, not even in keeping up or submitting the ordinary vernacular accounts and reports. Those who know a little Bengali have, as far as possible, been kept at work in the office, with a view to improving their knowledge of reading and writing. Some of them have made satisfactory progress, and a head constable has been retained in the office throughout the year to assist in the vernacular department and to instruct these men.

The arms and accoutrements are the same as those in use last year. The retention of a skilled blacksmith, who is also employed in teaching his trade to one or two men of the force, has enabled repairs to the guns to be effected, when necessary. All the guns are therefore kept in good order. Two constables, who have been taught since they enlisted the force to work on leather, are employed as occasion requires in repairing the accoutrements.

No change has been made in the uniform. The cost of a man's outfit in the frontier police is an annual and heavy charge on his salary. Were it not that the men have hitherto (unavoidably) been much employed as working parties on buildings and roads, for which they get 2 annas per day working allowance, they would have found it difficult in this district to provide sufficient funds to pay off the annual expenses for their clothing. The uniform soon gets shabby and is worn out with the exception of the great coat within the year. A constable in this district is obliged to travel with his gun, accoutrements, &c., and has to carry his great coat strapped to his back. As a rule, the jungle is thick and he must push his way through it. At night he sleeps in his uniform and great coat, and perhaps for miles on his road in bad weather he can find no shelter. It is therefore not astonishing that his uniform soon gets shabby and worn out. A man who for instance may be out for three months supervising the clearing of jungle on boundary lines, generally comes back with his uniform in a most dilapidated condition, and as already remarked the men are much engaged in moving about the country on various duties. The Chief Commissioner suggested an increase of the Government allowance but his decision has not been communicated as yet. The cost of a complete kit for a constable is about Rs. 18-12.

As shewn in columns XXVIII to XXXIV in the Return F, the total casualties from all cases amounted to 51 men. Only three out of

seven deserters were arrested and punished under Act V. Thirteen men were discharged on the recommendation of the Civil Surgeon and seven men were punished under the Penal Code, *i. e.*, two for theft, one man for house-trespass, two men for extorting information (section 348, Indian Penal Code), and two men under Act V, section 29, for neglect of duty. Simple dismissal has not been resorted to as a means of punishment, as it would probably not have a deterrent effect (except perhaps in a few instances) while service in this district continues to be unpopular. If the number of men enlisted be taken since 1867, when the force was first organized, it will be seen that there are but few of the old hands remaining; of those enlisted in 1867 there remain 24 men.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1868 | " | 3 | " |
| 1869 | " | 2 | " |
| 1870 | " | 20 | " |
| 1871 | " | 22 | " |
| 1872 | " | 12 | " |
| TOTAL | | 83 | men. |

During the year permanent promotion was given to 1 inspector, 1 sub-inspector, 1 head constable and 45 constables. Five men were given posts as officiating head constables. Reductions were of 3 head constables and 8 constables. The total amount of fines is Rs. 141-6; out of which 1 sub-inspector was fined Rs. 5, 4 head constables Rs. 12-8, the balance Rs. 123-14 was inflicted on 82 constables. The budget grant for the year was Rs. 52,346; against this sum the actual expense of Rs. 51,983 was charged. This excludes the amount subscribed by the men for their clothing, *viz.*, Rs. 3,532. No new buildings were erected. The houses for two of the native officers were removed from their old sites, as they were situated dangerously near the Superintendent's bungalow. The whole of the police lines with the exception of 16 houses were rethatched, and a great number of the posts renewed. The whole of this work was done by the constables who received 2 annas per diem working allowance while employed on the buildings. The houses are all made with *katcha* materials, and the walls of a great many of them require to be renewed throughout. Want of funds and a sufficient quantity of grass prevented the rethatching of the remaining 16 houses, but they will be completed before the rains. The accommodation provided is not sufficient for all the men, but for the present there is room for those at head-quarters, as 24 men and a sub-inspector are away at Sibsagar on duty.

Mr. Cawley has continued to take much interest in the police, and it is mainly due to him that they have been maintained in a state of efficiency; the Deputy Commissioner is very much indebted to him for the manner in which he has discharged this part of his duties. Mr. Livesay has been very useful in drilling the men and in assisting in various ways; his knowledge of engineering and plan-drawing, &c., has enabled him to render very valuable assistance, which the Deputy Commissioner gladly acknowledges. Mr. Livesay has been specially recommended for promotion. Ram Charan's unfortunate death was a great loss to the police. Jatadhari, Inspector, has discharged his duties satis-

factorily during the year. He has lately been given the promotion (caused by the death of Ram Charan Sing) which his long service in these hills fairly entitle him to.

Boundaries.

It is a matter for congratulation, to the Deputy Commissioner at least, that the boundaries of this district have now been clearly laid down, and the greater part of them surveyed; it is with a feeling of relief that the Deputy Commissioner notices this fact, as the boundaries have hitherto absorbed a great deal of his time. In 1866 there was no boundary between the Garo Hills and Goalpara, and that between the Hills and Mymensing had not been adopted by Government, although it had been surveyed by the Revenue Survey Officers and demarcated. It was only in 1870 that this boundary was asserted, and the rights of the zamindars of Susang and Sherpur enquired into; the claims of these zamindars have been finally extinguished by compensation, and the right of Government to all lands north of the line from Bahadurkatta to the Moheshkali asserted; this work was completed in 1873-74. In March 1874 the boundary between Goalpara and the Hills was laid down by a special officer, but this boundary was not finally adopted until July 1875. It is now being demarcated with masonry marks in a very permanent manner. The work will, it is hoped, be finished this year.

By the proclamation issued under the orders of the Chief Commissioner on the 16th July 1875, the zamindars of Karaibari, Mechpara, Kalumalupara, and others have been forbidden to make any collection, of cesses, &c., within the Garo Hills as defined by the new boundaries, and they have been given time (to 1st May 1876) to file their claims to compensation for the relinquishment of these cesses. At first the date fixed for the submission of their claims was the 1st March, but it was subsequently extended to the 1st May. The Deputy Commissioner is engaged in making the collections within the tract thus taken over. The Garo Hills is now one complete well-defined district; and when the claims of the zamindars are extinguished, the Government will be in sole possession of a tract of country capable of much improvement. The policy of dealing with the low-land zamindars which has just now been adopted, was recommended by the Deputy Commissioner as far back as 1866, but the matter has remained pending from one cause or another (principally owing to the want of clearly defined external boundaries) up to the present time.

The boundary between Mohendragunge and Daloo was demarcated and surveyed by Captain Williamson and Captain Badgley, Deputy Superintendent of Topographical Survey, this season, and a part of the boundary between the Khasi Hills and the Garo country, from the Sylhet frontier to the junction of the Rangkai with the Somessari was also surveyed and marked out. The remaining part of this latter boundary from the Rangkai to Kamrup will be finished, it is expected, early next cold weather. Besides this survey party employed on boundary work under Captain Badgley, there have been no other surveys in operation.

Public works.

There is not much to report under this head; Rs. 5,000 was the grant allotted for the improvement of the Roomari and Tura road. The original estimate being Rs. 17,704, the balance will gradually be allotted as funds are available,

and the road will be improved by widening it and constructing timber bridges, &c.; as was noted in the report last year, this road was opened for traffic in April last, and it remained open for the passage of carts until the month of June, when some heavy landslips having fallen it was only passable to baggage animals during the rains. Repairs were undertaken early in the cold weather, and the road has been kept open, and has been regularly used by carts since that time. The road is now a very fair one all the way to Roomari; whenever it has been possible to dispense with bridges, they have been done away with, and ramps cut down into the nullahs, or else the obstacle to be crossed has been built up with stone in the manner suggested by the Chief Commissioner. Several of the bridges were burnt during the last month by jungle fires, which have been unusually bad this year, but they were immediately repaired and the interruption to traffic was only temporary. A flying bridge on the same principle as that at Burnihat was maintained at the Mukdanga Ferry during the rains and worked very well.

In the months of April and May 1875 good progress was made with the road which connects Daloo with Tura; this road, which is now only passable for baggage animals, it is proposed to convert into a cart road. Four or five miles were prepared for cart traffic by May, *i. e.*, from Daloo to the village of Nakdampara. It was found impossible to go on with the work during the cold weather from November to March. The only overseer allowed the Deputy Commissioner, returned from sick leave on 18th November 1875, and he had to be employed in completing the repairs, &c., to the Roomari road in the early part of the cold weather, and just at the time that he should have been prepared to have proceeded to Daloo and taken up work at the place it had been left off last year, he imagined himself in a very bad state of health and incapable of further work in the department, and resigned the service. And his successor did not arrive until the 15th March 1876, when it was too late to attempt anything. The Deputy Commissioner would himself have endeavoured to lay out a part of this road, but his continual absence on boundary work prevented it. The Daloo-Tura road is in fair order and is quite passable for laden animals.

There is much difficulty in getting labour in the hills for road work. The Garos have not yet taken to it, and the plains people are averse to working in the hills. A number of Behar coolies were employed on the road near Roomari, but notwithstanding every reasonable inducement was offered, they would not be persuaded to cross the Kalapani, *i. e.*, the name they give to the Kaloo river near Mankarchur, neither could they be persuaded to work at Daloo. The demand for labour on the Assam trunk road from Dhubri to Gauhati may account for this in a measure.

The paths to Nilbari and Rongrengiri were kept free of jungle, and open for traffic for foot passengers throughout the year; the Garos kept these lines clear free of expense. It was not found practicable to do much to improve them, as all the labour that was available was required for works near the station or on the main road to Roomari.

The station roads have been put in fair order, and the aqueduct completed; this last work is a great convenience and it is moreover a safeguard in the case of fire.

The staging bungalows along the Roomari were maintained in good order the greater part of the year; in the month of March the house of Putimari was unfortunately destroyed by a jungle fire; the small huts at Harigaon were also destroyed by one of these fires. These accidents, though much to be regretted, are not surprising. The Deputy Commissioner's acquaintance with these hills has extended over ten years, yet he never has seen the country anything like so parched and burnt up as it was in the latter part of the month of March and the early part of April. The fires starting from the jhooms passed beyond all human control and spread over the hills. The station of Tura has had more than one narrow escape of being burnt, although it is fairly well protected by having the jungle cleared all round, and being separated on the south-west and north, the directions from which fires come, by the Rungkong and other streams.

The buildings in the station have been thoroughly repaired. The item for repairs in this district, where nearly all the buildings are cutcha, is a serious one and entails much labour and trouble. The winds prevalent in February, March and April do much damage and render frequent repairs to the thatched roofs necessary. The only important new building is the cutcherry, which was commenced during the year. All the frame-work is now up and the thatching has been commenced, and it is hoped that it will be completed in the course of two and a half to three months. It will be a good and substantial building when finished. It is greatly needed, as the present cutcherry is quite unfit for the purpose. The record-room, new magazine and other buildings which were long ago sanctioned will soon be required, but no provision has as yet been made for them in the budget. A good lock-up has been built; it is large enough to contain 25 prisoners; it was finished the other day.

The Garos of the inner hills built two good nokphanties or bachelors' houses for accommodation when coming into the station on business; they are large and commodious houses, and well suited for the purpose for which they are intended. They are constructed at no charge to Government beyond a few small presents to the Luskurs and Luckmas.

Babu Apurva Krishna Mitter served as Overseer here from the beginning of the year, January 1875, to the 17th August 1875, when he went away on leave. He returned from leave on the 18th November 1875, and resigned his appointment and left these hills on the 15th March 1876. He did good work at first and is a capable officer, but he had latterly made up his mind to go, and had in consequence lost all interest in his work. His successor, Nesarahmed, Engineer Apprentice, seems an intelligent youth.

An account of the sums expended on public works and works paid from the District Improvement Fund will be found in the appendix.

Education.

There are now 9 schools in the Garo Hills under the Deputy Commissioner (distinguished from those under the Missionaries) as compared with 5 schools on the 31st March last year. In these schools on the 31st

March there were 181 boys; no girls were under tuition during the year. The following are the races to which the pupils belong:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Garos ... ... | 56 | 56 |
| Hajong ... ... | 78 | |
| Konch ... ... | 8 | |
| Koomar ... ... | 12 | |
| Kooree ... ... | 1 | |
| Mussalman ... ... | 12 | |
| Nepalese ... ... | 2 | |
| Banai ... ... | 1 | |
| Narwa ... ... | 1 | |
| Christian ... ... | 1 | |
| Mech ... ... | 2 | |
| Mallee ... ... | 1 | 125 |
| | TOTAL | 181 |

The schools now in existence are in the following villages:—

| | Number of boys. | Number of Garos. |
|---|---|---|
| (1) Turagiri ... | 17 | 11 |
| (2) Batajhore ... | 24 | none |
| (3) Kodaldoha ... | 20 | 3 |
| (4) Mohendragunge | 25 | none |
| (5) Totlengkura ... | 21 | 8 |
| (6) Onajhora ... | 19 | 9 |
| (7) Maijpara ... | 22 | 10 |
| (8) Dabreng ... | 22 | 10 |
| (9) Mendengpara ... | 11 | 5 |
| | 181 | 56 |

These schools are situated in the south-west and southern parts of the Garo Hills. The operations of the Missionaries are confined to the northern hills.

The following schools were given up during the year under report:—

(1) Tura* abolished on the 1st November 1875.

* 2nd school.

(2) Kebolpara abolished on the 1st October 1875.

(3) Purvakhasua abolished on the 21st November 1875.

There were formerly two schools at Tura, but the attendance having fallen off very greatly, the second school was abandoned and the pupils are now taught in one building in the Garo village known as Turagiri, which is situated close below the station. All the schools except the Tura school are situated close to the plains, and most of them are near the Mymensing border. The Kebolpara school was abandoned on account of the prevalence of the kala hajar sickness, from which many of the pupils died; some of the pupils who were reading in the Kebolpara school will probably pursue their studies in the Batajhore school, which is not far off. The Luskur, to whose aid this school owes its existence, has been very ill

himself, otherwise he would most likely have induced several Garo boys to attend at the new school at Batajhore.

4 new schools, *viz.* :—

(1) Batajhore,
(2) Kodaldoha,
(3) Mohendragunge,
(4) Maijpara,

have been opened during the year; of those however, one, *viz.*, that of Mohendragunge, was received by transfer from the District of Goalpara. The number of schools now in existence are 9, which contrasted with those shewn on the rolls in 1875 gives an increase of 3 schools. The number of boys of all classes has increased from 120 boys to 181 boys, or an increase of 61 boys. There has, however, been a falling off in the number of Garos in attendance last year; on 31st March 1875, 72 Garos were borne on the rolls, the number has fallen to 56, or a decrease of 16 boys. The increase is mainly due to the Hajongs, whose numbers have increased from 32 to 78, or 46 boys, the other races have risen from 16 to 47—a very considerable rise. The figures therefore stand thus :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number of boys of all races last year | ... | 120 |
| Number on 31st March 1876 | ... | 181 |
| Increase | ... | 61 |
| Garos last year ... ... | ... | 72 |
| This year ... ... | ... | 56 |
| Decrease | ... | 16 |
| Hajongs this year ... ... | ... | 78 |
| Do. last year ... ... | ... | 32 |
| Increase | ... | 46 |
| Other races this year ... | ... | 47 |
| Last year .. ... | ... | 16 |
| Increase | ... | 31 |
| Total increase ... ... | ... | 77 |
| Total decrease ... ... | ... | 16 |
| TOTAL | ... | 61 |

The decrease in the number of Garos is chiefly attributable to the abolition of the schools at Kebolpara and Purvakhasua; had these schools remained, the Garo attendance would have been about the same as last year. The number of Garos in attendance, however, as compared with other races is small, and the attention of the sub-inspector has been directed to this fact, and efforts will be made to increase the number of Garo youths during the year 1876-77. The average monthly attendance during the past year was 119 boys. The boys are all learning to read and write in Bengali; only some 3 or 4 Garo boys are learning Garo, they are

besides learning the Bengali language. The books in use in the schools are the—

Infant Teacher.
Charupat, 1st part.
Budhodoy.
Oakkha—Arithmetic.
Grammar.

Of the total number of boys on the rolls, only 22 can read and write Bengali well; of the rest of the boys some are learning their alphabet, and others are reading the Infant Teacher. The Luskurs and Mundeels, near whose village the schools were established, built the houses for the pundit and the school, and the State was put to no expense on these buildings.

The actual cost of the village school under the Deputy Commissioner during 1875-76 was as follows:—

| | Rs. | A. | P. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pay of pundits and price of books ... | 1,033 | 6 | 1 |
| Pay and travelling allowance of Sub-Inspector of Schools ... ... ... | 744 | 4 | 0 |
| | 1,777 | 10 | 1 |

Out of this sum, Rupees 1,388-7-7 was only expended during the financial year. The balance which represented the salaries of the pundits and Sub-Inspector for the first three months of 1876 was not drawn until April, owing to the Deputy Commissioner's absence on tour, and to the Sub-Inspector's having accompanied him up to the easternmost part of the district. From the above figures it will be seen that each boy cost the State Rupees 9-13-4 per annum, or about 13 annas per mensem, or, excluding cost of inspection, Rupees 5-11-3.

The cost of inspection as compared with the expenditure on the schools is heavy, but it is chiefly owing to charges for travelling allowance of the Sub-Inspector; this is unavoidable, as the schools are scattered over a great length of the frontier from near Mankarchur to the Sylhet District.

The Deputy Commissioner inspected the schools at Mohendragunge, Totlengkura, Onajhora, Maijpara, Dabreng and Mendengpara during the months of January and February 1876, when he was engaged on the Garo Hills and Mymensing boundary. The Mohendragunge school was inspected on the 24th January 1876. A fair number of boys were found in attendance, nearly as many as the school-house could accommodate, or the pundit instruct. The boys who were all inhabitants of the plains were learning to read Bengali. Some of them could read and write and do simple sums very well, but the majority were only learning their letters. This school was only transferred from Goalpara on the 1st January 1876.

The pundit receives Rupees 5 per mensem and supplements his pay by fees, which, however, the parents of the pupils did not seem over-anxious to contribute; an arrangement was, however, made by which the pundit will receive about Rupees 5 in fees, which will give him Rupees 10

per mensem sufficient to content him. The school-house is in great want of thorough repair, or perhaps an entirely new building will be more suitable.

The other schools were inspected in February 1876. At Totlengkura 21 boys were borne on the rolls, and 13 were found present. One Garo boy in this school could read very well in Bengali and he understood fairly what he read. At the Onajhora school there were 19 boys on the roll, of whom 9 are Garos, 13 were present on the day of inspection. There was a good attendance of 22 boys at the Maijpara school, 10 of whom were Garos; the ages of the boys varied from 8 to 18 years. This school is a new one, having been established only last October 1875; the pundit did not seem very intelligent, but he is capable of imparting instruction in the rudiments of Bengali. Several of the boys read fairly. At the Darleng school there are also 22 boys on the rolls, of whom 16 were found present. There are 10 Garo boys. The school-house was built by Binon Luskur. One boy, a Garo, read particularly well and fluently. The only other school is the Mendengpara school situated in the Goneshurd Duar. There is a poor attendance at this school; the total number of boys being only 11, of whom 2 alone were found present on the day of inspection; 5 of the boys are Garos, and one of them is the son of the Luskur of the adjacent jurisdiction. It was found the pundit resided some distance away from the school, and was thus often late in taking up the duties of the day. He was not present at the inspection of the school, but the Deputy Commissioner met him as he was proceeding to the school after the inspection was completed. He was directed to make immediate arrangements for providing himself quarters near the school-house.

The school at Tura is held in a house in the Garo village below the station; it was frequently inspected during the year by the Deputy Commissioner. The Emamgiri school has not been re-established; the Garos of that village do not shew much desire for education at present.

There has been a difficulty in obtaining good school teachers. The present teachers hardly know enough Garo as a rule to impart instruction to the boys, who are only acquainted with that language. The Mission Normal School will be able, it is hoped, to furnish some teachers during the year 1876-77, for there has been a great increase in the attendance at this school, as will be seen further on.

From the return received from the Reverend Mr. Mason of the American Mission, it appears there were 9 Garo schools open during the year under report in the Garo Hills District, but on the 31st March from temporary causes 4 of these schools were closed. Besides these schools there are several others under the management of the Mission which are situated in the Goalpara District. Mr. Mason reports that there were in all 18 schools under the Mission in operation during the year, 5 of which were closed on the 31st March. The number of schools under the Mission in 1875 was 15, so the figures of the year shew a temporary increase of 3 schools, which is not a great advance. The number of boys actually on the rolls in the schools in the Garo Hills on the 31st March was 63, and in the schools in the Goalpara District there were 133, making a total of 196 boys; if these figures are correct

there is a considerable diminution in the attendance as compared with 1873-74, when there were 20 village schools and 288 boys borne on the rolls. Mr. Mason has been asked to explain the cause of this falling off.

There were 9 Garo girls in attendance at the Rajasimula schools in the Garo Hills and at 2 schools in the Goalpara District. Mr. Mason reports that there was an attendance of 4 or 5 girls. He reports that there is an increasing desire for the education of girls, and he notes one instance of a girl who valued education so much that she declined to be married to the young man of her choice until *he* had become more advanced in his studies. It is satisfactory to know he pursued them with good effect, and that his persistence duly met with its reward. The girl school which was superintended by Mr. Keith is reported to have been a success while it was open, and many of the girls who attended it have turned out well. The pupils in the school in charge of the Missionaries all commence by learning to read in the simple Garo books which have been prepared by the Missionaries. After they are sufficiently educated in them, they are taught Bengali in the Bengali character.

There has been a decided improvement in the attendance at the Normal School during the past year. Mr. Mason states that when he took charge of the school on 17th November last, there were but 17 pupils on the rolls; there were 37 on the 31st March. This school supplied 3 pupil teachers against one last year. More candidates are reported as anxious for admission to this school, and there are many among the present pupils who will soon be capable of performing the duties of school pundits. In the course of a year or 18 months, therefore, this school may be expected to turn out a supply of village teachers nearly equal to the demand. Mr. Keith, who has for the last three and a half years been attached to the Mission, left the country last March, and Messrs. Mason and Phillips are new to the work; the report that has been received from them is not therefore as full as might have otherwise been expected. Mr. Mason had not received all the forms for the report, but these will soon be supplied, and further details will be submitted through the Inspector of Schools.

The schools in the Goalpara District have been inspected by the Deputy Inspector of Schools, Goalpara.

As the Deputy Commissioner, Garo Hills, has elsewhere explained, he was employed nearly all the cold season on boundary work and on tours in the inner hills, and has again this year been unable personally to visit the Mission schools. The boundaries of this district are now nearly all defined and demarcated, and next cold season the Deputy Commissioner hopes he may have leisure to make a careful inspection of all the schools under the Mission.

The amount of the grant made for the maintenance of the Mission schools was the same as last year, *viz.*, Rupees 1,824 or at the rate of Rupees 152 per mensem. This grant has been reduced for the year 1876-77 to Rupees 1,500 by the order of the Chief Commissioner.

The following books are in use in the Mission schools: The First, Second and Third Garo Books, the Garo Gospels in Garo, the Shishu Sikha, three parts; Buddodoy, Bengali Grammar, Bengali Geography, Bengali Arithmetic, History of Bengal, History of Hindustan.

The Gospels of St. Mark, Luke and John, have been translated into the Garo language and published during the year. No grant has been made this year to the Mission on account of the publication of Garo books. Mr. Mason reports that 73 converts were baptized during the past year, and that the nominal roll of Christians belonging to the Mission was 527, but many of these have died, and some have returned to their old faith, and it is thought that not more than 402 Christians, converts of undoubted standing and sincerity, can be relied on. The number of converts to the Christian religion in 1874 was 62, so the return for the year under notice which shews an increase of 9 converts over last year may be considered favourable. The conduct of the converts has been very good, and they have not figured in any cases whatever. They continue to live in peaceful terms with their neighbours, who still adhere to their old religion. Messrs. Mason and Phillips paid the Garo Hills a visit in September 1875 with a view of selecting a site for the erection of some Mission buildings at Tura. A site was allotted them, and they made some arrangements for commencing the work, but they were prevented from carrying out their intention by want of funds, and the head-quarters of the Mission still remain as before at Goalpara.

It has not been found practicable as yet to start an artisan school at Goalpara, though the Missionaries are very anxious to open one. Mr. Mason who appears to be a practical man, who could give the boys some instruction in carpentry, says, if he was only supplied with tools, he would undertake to make a commencement. He has been asked what tools he will require and the probable cost of them.

Mr. Keith's return to America after a short residence of only three and a half years is a loss to the Mission, particularly at the present time, when Messrs. Mason and Phillips have hardly had time to acquire sufficient knowledge of the languages to enable them to push on the work vigorously, but they are addressing themselves to the task before them, and there is every chance of the Mission work and the education of the Garos eventually making good progress in their hands.

Since the foregoing part of the report on the working of the schools under the Mission was written, a reply has been received from the Reverend Mr. Mason explaining the apparent falling off in the attendance at the schools during the past as compared with former years; Mr. Mason describes the diminution as seeming rather than real, and he states that the average attendance at each school for 1875-76 shews an improvement over former years. The figures for 1873-74, he notes, give an average attendance of 14·40; in 1874-75 6·87, and in 1875-76 15·07. Mr. Mason goes on to explain that the Tura school which was shewn in the returns of 1874 under the head of Mission schools, has since been transferred to the charge of the Deputy Commissioner, Garo Hills. The girls' school at Rajasimula has been amalgamated with the boys' school at that place. Again Mr. Mason states that two schools which had been in session the greater part of the year 1875-76, and had an average attendance of 20 pupils were closed just before the 31st March, but Mr. Mason does not give the reason for the temporary closure of these schools. He doubts the exactness of the figures given for 1874, which shewed 288 pupils on the rolls on the 31st March of that year. He thinks there could not have been more

than 265 boys and girls. In his letter which will be found in the appendix he remarks: "Among these wild hills Garos, a good school cannot continually be sustained in every village; unless we pay men to go and sit on the rocks and lie drunk most of the time, the number of schools must vary!" No doubt there is considerable difficulty in persuading the Garos to maintain a regular attendance at the schools; admitting, however, all that Mr. Mason urges, it would appear that the final results of 1875, so far as they can be shewn by figures, *only* equal those obtained in 1874. It is to be regretted that the members of the Mission are so often changed. Mr. Stoddard had not been many years at the work, when he was succeeded by Mr. Keith, who after a little more than three years' service has returned to America. This alone is sufficient to account for the stagnation which has marked the years 1874-75, 1875-76. If the present Missionaries, who are young married men, are able to remain 8 to 10 years uninterruptedly at their posts and lay themselves out zealously to prosecute the task before them, real and permanent progress will, there seems no reasonable cause to doubt, be obtained.

Post Office.

The Post Office has been maintained efficiently during the year, though communications with Dhubri were occasionally interrupted, notably in August last, when for four or five days no dâk was received at Tura. The rate of speed is very slow owing to the runners not travelling at night. Unless more runners are allowed in each stage, the men cannot be expected to travel at night, as the country is infested with wild animals It is not likely, however, the Government of India will be inclined to sanction any further outlay on the line. The Deputy Commissioner is anxious that a new route should be adopted; until the last few months the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara was interested in the maintenance of the present line, but since the thannah at Singimari has been removed to Salmara, his necessity for using this post has ceased. The maintenance of the service in the rains between Singimari and Dhubri entails much trouble and expense on the Goalpara authorities, as the country is often completely under water. The Deputy Commissioner, Garo Hills, ascertained for himself the difficulties of the route when he proceeded to Dhubri last July in order to see the line at the worst season of the year. The country was then much inundated, and he had great difficulty in performing the journey. The dâks had to be crossed over the numerous khalls and rivers by boats temporarily pressed into the service. The Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, who is about to start a postal service between Putamari and Dhubri, would like to have the Tura mails conveyed by that route as far as Putamari. The Garo Hills would, however, lose instead of gain by this arrangement. It was therefore proposed by the Deputy Commissioner, Garo Hills, that the mails should in future be despatched through Rungpore to Chilmari, from whence they would be crossed by boat to Rohumari. There is a daily dâk between Rungpore and Chilmari, so the only extra expense would be the cost of the boat establishment, Rupees 40 or 50 per mensem, which would be met by the abolition of the runners between Singimari and Dhubri, or the mails might be conveyed *viâ* Bagwah. From Rohumari to Tura there is a good road, which is not the case between Singimari and Putimari, or Singimari and Harigaon. The proposal has been

submitted to the Chief Inspector of Post Offices, Assam; the matter is not yet settled.

Licenses to carry fire-arms.

The number of licenses to carry fire-arms granted in the past year was 84, being an increase of only 4 licenses over the year 1874-75. Of these licenses 35 were held by Garos, 49 by Nepalese, Bengalis and other classes. No licenses for the sale of ammunition were granted during the year, and there are no shops licensed for the purpose, except in the Goalpara, Rungpore, and Mymensing Districts. The Garos have been discouraged, as the Chief Commissioner directed, in their wish to obtain fire-arms as much as possible. The order directing Garos visiting the station to deposit their arms (swords, spears, &c.) outside the limits of the Tura station, has worked well; and the few cases of infringement of the order which have occurred were attributable to ignorance. It is now an unusual sight to see a Garo in the station with his weapons in his hands.

Unnatural deaths.

There were 35 cases of unnatural deaths reported during the year as compared with 51 in 1874-75 and 25 in 1873-74. If the number of deaths (nine) caused by one single tiger at the Selhal last year be deducted from the return of that year, the difference between the two years, 1874-75 and 1875-76, is not so very great. Of the reported deaths, five were caused by tigers; bears killed four persons, one of whom was a Government dâk-runner; elephants killed eight persons; four persons were drowned; five fell from trees and were killed; one man was burnt to death; seven persons committed suicide, and one person was killed by falling into a deer trap. Another case of reported accidental death by a fall from a tree has come to light, but it is strongly suspected that this case, which was not reported at the time, is one of culpable homicide, and not of accidental death. The matter is now under investigation. Wild elephants have caused most of the reported deaths. These animals which have not been hunted since 1873 are becoming exceedingly numerous and dangerous to human life and property. Several applications have been made for permission to shoot elephants which have become notoriously dangerous, and the Deputy Commissioner has been compelled to grant the request in several cases. Tigers have not caused so much loss of life this as last year, but they are very troublesome in the southern hills near the Mymansing border, and are often found bold enough to enter human dwellings and seize the inhabitants and carry them off. The hills have been visited by shikaries who come from the Purneah District, but they have been unable to kill very many tigers, or to make any perceptible difference in their numbers. The station of Tura has been rather more free the past year from tigers than before. One Mahant was killed last May near the station. Leopards are extremely common; but although very destructive to goats, dogs, &c., they do little damage to human life. Rewards were paid as follows for the destruction of wild animals :—37 tigers, 3 bears, 5 leopards and 5 tiger cubs, Rupees 1,020. No deaths from snakes were reported during the year. Returns of cattle killed by wild animals except in the station of Tura are not available for the year 1875. It appears that tigers and leopards killed 22 head of cattle in the station during the calendar year. No measures beyond offering the

usual rewards were taken to exterminate wild animals. Jungle covers the whole country, and tigers, leopards, bears and other wild animals will continue abundant in these hills for many years to come, notwithstanding any measures that may be taken to extirpate them.

There were only six earthquakes during the year, of which five took place in the first week of September 1875 between the 3rd to 5th of that month, and the other on Christmas evening. The general direction of these earthquakes was nearly the same from east to west. The first and last earthquakes were the only severe ones. That which occurred on the 3rd September was by far the most felt, but no damage was done to any of the buildings of the station. It was a curious fact about this earthquake, that it was felt severely in the cutcherry, and was not noticed at all by some persons who were working in the Deputy Commissioner's cook-house, about 400 yards north-east from the cutcherry. The second earthquake on the night of the 3rd September and those on 4th and 5th seem to have been connected with the first disturbance on the 3rd September. Returns of these earthquakes were submitted to the Chief Commissioner.

General health of the people.

As far as is known, the general health of the people has been very good. There have been no epidemics of any kind during the year.

From the sanitary report of the Civil Surgeon it appears there has been a very considerable improvement in the health of the station, which is probably attributable to the clearance of the small jungle around the place, the establishment of latrines and conservancy arrangements; the system of latrines wants further development, and this will be attended to. The station was very fortunate to escape cholera, as this disease was very bad in the plains near Roomari between which place and Tura there is constant communication. The most common disease is fever, and the fever has been found to follow the variations of the rainfall very regularly which is described in a chart drawn for the purpose by Dr. Ferris. May and October, when the rains are commencing and drying up, are, as might be expected, the worst months for this disease; when the monsoon is at its highest the fever is as it were beaten down.

Dispensaries.

Only one dispensary has been open during the year, and that one is situated at Tura. This dispensary was not regularly started, as it was not found practicable to construct the buildings that were needed, but some temporary huts were placed at the Civil Surgeon's disposal in which he was able to accommodate a fair number of patients, many of them Garos. In the Civil Surgeon's sanitary report which will be found in the appendix, the results obtained in the charitable dispensary will be found narrated at length. Two hundred and seventy-one cases were treated as "in cases," of these 22 died. Eleven of these deaths occurred from dysentery and fever, and two from wounds caused by wild beasts. Several Garo women who had been frightfully wounded by sword-cuts delivered by the murderer Thoding of Rakmanpara (who was subsequently hung) were most successfully treated by the Civil Surgeon; the recovery of these patients had no doubt a very assuring effect on the Garo mind, and induced many persons to resort for treatment at Tura, where there seemed to be such a good chance of cure. Several persons suffering

from the complaint which has often been brought to the notice of the Government, "Kala Hazar," were treated successfully in many instances, and were restored to their families. The disease is malarial fever, which induces abnormal development of the spleen and disarrangement of other vital organs. The disease continues extremely prevalent in the low hills near the plains of Mymensing and Goalpara, and many villages are being depopulated by it. When the disease makes its appearance in any person, he or she is immediately turned out of the village to shift for himself, unless it so happens that the disease has become thoroughly established, when the Garos recognize the fact that segregation is useless. The disease is not infectious, although by the Garos it is believed to be so.

Rupees 224 were expended during the year in the payment of the dispensary attendants and in the purchase of food, medicines, &c., for the patients. The dispensary was maintained at a cost of little less than one rupee per head for each person. The Garos are gradually gaining confidence in the treatment of the Civil Surgeon, and when the new buildings are completed there is little doubt the attendance will be larger than it has hitherto been. Dr. Ferris who is now well known to the people, and has their confidence, has taken great interest in the treatment of the Garo cases, and in the dispensary generally. An attempt was made to open a charitable dispensary at Mankarchur and Roomari, and several native gentlemen who were invited to subscribe to the undertaking did so, but the funds which were promised did not amount to a sum sufficient to provide an income of Rupees 40 per mensem, so the project has been abandoned, the Government rules not permitting the grant of aid from the State to an institution whose annual income is less than Rupees 40. It is to be regretted that the project had to be given up as this hospital would have been of great benefit to the poor dwelling at Mankarchur and Roomari as well as to the Garos of the border villages.

Vaccination.

The results obtained this year are very satisfactory and show a great advance on the returns of last year. In 1873-74 when vaccination, it may be said, was first attempted, there were many difficulties to contend against, one of these being the repugnance evinced by the Garos to permitting lymph to be taken from their arms, consequently crusts had to be obtained from Darjeeling, and this resulted in much delay, and it often happened that the imported lymph was not good, and operations performed with it were unsuccessful. In the year 1873-74 only 784 persons were vaccinated. In 1874-75 Dr. Ferris succeeded partially in overcoming the objections of the people, and in many instances the Garos permitted lymph to be taken from their arms; this was a great step gained, and it paved the way for the more extended operations of this year. In 1874-75, 1,733 operations were performed, and during 1875-76 this number has been doubled, and the persons operated on amount to over 4,000. The operations were carried out in the north-eastern and south-western part of the hills in the Damra Duar and the hills south-east of Tura and near Mohendragunge. The staff at Dr. Ferris' disposal consisted of 4 Garos whom he had trained, and he was only allowed their services from October to March. Although nominally four vaccinators were allowed, it was not possible always to keep the four men at work, as two

of them were often away from work conveying letters to the Civil Surgeon, going into the station for pay, &c. Another difficulty which checked the work was Dr. Ferris' absence from November to January, when he held charge of the Goalpara District in addition to his own duties. The population of these hills is roughly set down at 90,000, so the rate of 30 operations per 1,000 which Dr. Bow, Deputy Surgeon-General, considers a satisfactory result, has been obtained; the actual figures being rather more than 33 per 1,000. The number of infants vaccinated was 792, or nearly 20 per cent. of the total number of vaccinations; this is not so very successful, but compared with last year's and previous year's figures it is encouraging. The percentage of successful operations during the past year 94·54 contrasts favourably with the figures of the year 1874-75, when 83·26 was the result obtained. Dr. Ferris closely inspected the vaccinations in the north-eastern hills; the number of cases actually inspected by him amounted to 1,680 or ·42 per cent. of the total operations. He would have inspected the whole of the cases, and probably himself have largely extended the work had he not been called away to Goalpara. The vaccination in the neighbourhood of Mohendragunge was inspected by one of the Native Doctors attached to the district. He saw 2,068 cases or over 50 per cent. of the total operations. The average number of persons 1021·50 vaccinated by each vaccinator is also satisfactory. The total cost of the vaccinations and establishment during the year was Rs. 240. So each operation cost rather less than one anna. Compared with the results obtained in the other districts of Assam as shewn in the annual report on vaccination for 1875, the outturn of successful cases and the small cost incurred are very satisfactory and reflected great credit on the Civil Surgeon, Dr. Ferris, who has trained his vaccinators carefully, and has taken a warm interest in the work, which is one of great importance to the people. If equally good results are obtained for a few years more, the Garos will enjoy an immunity from small-pox which they never dreamt of.

Inoculation.

No cases of attempts at inoculation have been reported during the year, and it is thought the Garos are now thoroughly content with the new system, which they have seen so successfully introduced amongst them. In all villages visited by the vaccinators and by the Civil Surgeon the people welcomed them and him most cordially and thoroughly appreciated the efforts that were made in their behalf.

GARO HILLS;
*May 20th*, 1876.

(Sd.) W. J. WILLIAMSON, *Capt.*,
*Deputy Commissioner.*

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*Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner of Assam in the Judicial Department (Political), dated Shillong, 23rd June* 1876.

READ—

A letter dated the 28th May 1876, from the Deputy Commissioner, Garo Hills, submitting the Annual Administration Report of the Garo Hills for the year 1875-76.

THE Chief Commissioner notes with pleasure that the attitude and conduct of the Garos throughout the year under review have been most

satisfactory. Year by year these people are becoming more and more amenable to rule, and Colonel Keatinge trusts that the time is not far distant when Garo raids will have become a mere tradition. It is very gratifying to learn that during the year there were no raids, and no cases of dacoity or serious crime along the borders. The quiescent state of the lately independent country is a proof that the Deputy Commissioner has been successful in impressing these savages with a respect for law and order, and with a fear of the consequences of acts they have been long accustomed to regard as perfectly defensible.

2. The system of Luskurs has worked well during the year. The Chief Commissioner regrets that other important work prevented the Deputy Commissioner from addressing himself to the task of defining the local limits of the jurisdiction of each Luskur. He will be very glad to consider any scheme that Captain Williamson may propose for taking a house census.

3. The tour of the Deputy Commissioner extended, with intervals, through several months. Colonel Keatinge is well aware of the difficulties of travelling in the Garo Hills, and he is quite satisfied with the amount of ground got over by the Deputy Commissioner.

4. It is satisfactory to find that no evil has resulted from the withdrawal of the outpost from Ringigiri. The Chief Commissioner trusts that the good effect the establishment of this outpost had on the neighbouring villages will be lasting.

5. The reception that Captain Williamson met with everywhere on tour shows that the Garos are capable in some degree of appreciating the manner in which he has devoted himself to their improvement, and that he has used his influence with them to very good purpose. The Chief Commissioner especially notes with pleasure Captain Williamson's success in the settlement of a number of blood feuds, and in causing the destruction of a large number of human skulls, which were retained as trophies, and also his success in persuading the Garos to protect the virgin forest.

6. The establishment of the village post proposed by the Deputy Commissioner is heartily approved of by the Chief Commissioner. Some such system was very much needed in the Garo Hills, and Colonel Keatinge has little doubt but that the red envelope of the "Sircar" will in a few years be succeeded by an ordinary post.

7. The Chief Commissioner is glad to hear that the health of the people has been good throughout the year. The outturn of the crops was abundant.

8. There was little crime in the district during the year, and there was a large falling off in the total number of cases. This is gratifying, as it was rather to be expected that, as our administration became more firmly established, complaints would be more numerous, and there would be a consequent increase in the number of cases. The arrest and conviction of the dacoits in the Kangsha cases have had a very good effect. The total absence of all cases of frontier raids has already been noted. The case of the murder of the Bengali has been commented upon by the Chief Commissioner in his remarks on last year's Administration Report. The case of the incendiary and murderer Thoding is a most horrible one,